

wartime suppressions that putatively had occurred in protection of the community. From these advocates' perspective, speech must be free in order to benefit society; in those instances when speech demonstrably harms society, it can be abridged. "Clear and present danger" served as their benchmark for the level of harm that justifies suppression.

Rabban points out that First Amendment jurisprudence could have taken a different path. Beginning in the late 19th century, libertarian radicals argued for a broad freedom that would serve individual autonomy rather than the collective good. Under this view, everyone would have the right to speak regardless of viewpoint or impact on society. As Rabban observes, this approach might have provided a sturdier foundation for modern free speech than Chafee's disingenuous history and the Progressives' emphasis on community.

This important study ends by reflecting on the current challenges to free speech from the Left. Rabban urges that we recall the lessons the Progressives learned during World War I: democratic governments do not always act in the public interest, and freedom of speech is an essential check on them. It is a caution we ignore at our peril.

—*Timothy Gleason*

THE FOUNDING MYTHS OF ISRAEL.

By Ze'ev Sternhell. Translated by David Maisel. Princeton Univ. Press. 419 pp. \$29.95

Did the founders of modern Israel set out to create a socialist society? This book, published to coincide with the nation's 50th anniversary, answers the question with an emphatic "no." Sternhell, a political scientist at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, contends that the founders, facing the task of creating a nation out of disparate bands of immigrants, "had no patience for exper-

imentation" with socialism or any other unproven philosophy. When forced to choose between advancing socialist principles and attracting capital, David Ben-Gurion, Berl Katznelson, and the other founders invariably picked the latter. Tax rates favored the wealthy, for example, and the quality of schools varied according to neighborhood income. The leaders' pious invocations of socialist principles constituted "a mobilizing myth," the author asserts, "perhaps a convenient alibi that sometimes permitted the movement to avoid grappling with the contradiction between socialism and nationalism."

Sternhell detects similar hypocrisy in



some Israeli leaders of the 1990s. During a protest against the Oslo peace accords in 1995, demonstrators waved signs depicting Yitzhak Rabin as an SS officer. According to the author, speakers at the rally—including Benjamin Netanyahu, now the prime minister—voiced no objections to the hyperbole. "For the Right," Sternhell observes, "Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres were comparable to the worst enemy the Jewish people ever had." One month later, Rabin was assassinated. Israel became, in the author's dispiriting words, "the first democratic state—and from the end of the Second World War until now the only one—in which a political murder achieved its goal."

—*Ami E. Albernaz*

Religion & Philosophy

STRIVING TOWARDS BEING:

*The Letters of Thomas
Merton and Czeslaw Milosz.*

Edited by Robert Faggen. Farrar,
Straus & Giroux. 178 pp. \$21

What are friends for? The question is usually posed as though the answer were self-evident: friends offer help in time of need. But literary friendships are different. They leave a record, the quality of which depends on

the quality of the need—and of the help. In this remarkable 10-year correspondence between Merton, the American Trappist monk best known for his spiritual autobiography *The Seven Storey Mountain* (1948), and Milosz, winner of the 1980 Nobel Prize in literature, the quality of both is high indeed.

In 1958, when Merton initiated the correspondence, Milosz was living in France, a recent exile from the Stalinist regime in his native Poland. Milosz's poetry, now celebrated in the West, was untranslated, and his reputation did not extend beyond the bitter controversy surrounding *The Captive Mind* (1952, trans. 1953). To the Polish exile community, Milosz's extraordinary dissection of intellectual capitulation to communism was tainted by his having served the regime. To French leftists, the book was a blot on the legacy of Stalin. And to many Americans, *The Captive Mind* was just another anti-communist tract.

Faggen, a professor of literature at Claremont McKenna College, explains why Merton's reading of *The Captive Mind* was so distinctive: he "recognized that the book was not simply a condemnation of Communism but an attempt to understand the lure of Marxism in the wake of the erosion of the religious imagination." Merton's stance was clearly congenial to Milosz, whose wife and two sons had emigrated to America but whose own visa was being delayed on suspicion that, as a former official of the Polish government, he might be a spy. About his time in France, Milosz wrote, "I live in a little town near Paris and look at that literary turmoil with a dose of scorn—do not accuse me of pride as this is not my individual pride, I share it with young writers from Poland who visit me here, perhaps we all are more mature—at a price." Throughout the correspondence, which ranges beyond politics into fundamental questions of art, faith, and morality in a world darkened by war and genocide, this tension between pride and maturity is central.

Of the two writers, Milosz is the more relentless self-examiner. He agrees with Merton that it is important to resist group causes and political labels, but he goes on to offer a striking meditation on why such resistance should not be regarded as heroic: "Pride or ambition sometimes mislead us when we want to be individuals and not just

members of a group. But in general pride or ambition by breaking etiquettes is a positive force—and exactly for this reason writing, as self-assertion, is for me something suspect."

Faggen observes that while in the first letters "Milosz's eager response to Merton reveals his need for a spiritual father, . . . Milosz appears to take on that role himself as the correspondence develops." This is true in certain realms, notably the political. Yet some of the most affecting passages are those in which Merton counsels Milosz not to regard exile as a dead end: "What you write for Poland will be read with interest everywhere. You do not have to change your mental image of your audience. The audience will take care of itself." Wise words, not only reassuring but prophetic—and, for one of the greatest poets of our troubled century, exactly the help most needed.

—Martha Bayles

MARTIN HEIDEGGER: *Between Good and Evil.*

By Rudiger Safranski. Translated by Ewald Osers. Harvard Univ. Press. 474 pp. \$35

Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) poses a dilemma for the intellectual biographer. He was one of the more original and influential philosophers of the 20th century, and he was a supporter of the Third Reich. Situating his subject "between good and evil," Safranski, the author of *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy* (1991), addresses the perilous links between Heidegger's brilliant philosophy and his abominable politics.

Safranski's focus is Heidegger's quasi-mystical exploration of "Being," his attempt to find meaning in life through its intimate connections with death and nothingness. Heidegger believed that modern humanity had lost touch with its own essential nature because of the spiritual shallowness, materialism, and overall "inauthenticity" of contemporary life. Following the implications of his meta-

